

PICKING THE PERFECT PET FOR YOUR FAMILY

A guide from  **DENVER ZOO**

Pets provide companionship and give you something to care for; both are found to bring joy to pet owners. But owning a pet is a great responsibility, too.

Every animal needs

Food, Water, Shelter, Exercise, Love and Care

But what these essential things are for each animal is different. At Denver Zoo, Tatu the lion is a carnivore and eats meat while Mahali the hippo requires a large pool to wade in. Being able to meet these needs is essential – but could not be possible without many of the resources that Denver Zoo has, like large habitats and veterinary care. You can use this worksheet to help determine what animal is right for you and your family. Can you provide an environment where your pet can thrive?

What to ask when deciding to bring a pet home.

What kind of animal do you want to have join your family? Why?

How big does this animal get and how much space does this animal need?

What does this animal eat and how much? How does it get its water and how much does it need?

How much exercise does this animal need? What kind of exercise?

What kind of shelter or home does this animal need, inside or outside your home? How big does it need to be?

How long does this animal live? Can you take care of this animal for its whole life?

Is the animal nocturnal (meaning it sleeps during the day and is awake at night, or is it diurnal (meaning it is awake during the day and asleep at night)?

Is this animal domesticated or exotic?

Is this animal legal to own where you live?

Some animals come from places, like breeders or are found in the pet trade, where people don't take very good care of their animals. How can you make sure that you get your pet from a place that takes really good care of their animals?

Want to learn more about animals and their care needs? Head over to our [virtual animal demos](#) where some of our staff's pets become the stars.